



Utah's Osmond Brothers (Jay, Merrill, Wayne and Alan) will be declared honorary lifetime members of SPEBSQSA during Saturday night observance following competition.

Theater

A by-the-book 'Sweet Charity'

By Joseph Walker
Deseret News theater editor

SWEET CHARITY, Lagoon Opera House, Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. through Aug. 30. Tickets: \$6 adults, \$4.50 children (12 and under). Call 451-0101 for reservations.

FARMINGTON — It's probably unfair to compare "Sweet Charity," this summer's Lagoon Opera House production, with the last three shows David Dean has directed at the Davis County amusement park.

Unfair — but unavoidable.

I guess that's the price one must pay for extraordinary success, which is just what Dean was with each of those previous summer shows — extraordinarily successful.

It started with "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" in 1983, a riotous, uproarious, magnificent bit of musical comedy featuring a fabulous script, energetic performers overflowing with dash and professionalism and Dean's creative, inventive staging and interpretation. Nineteen eighty-four's "Once Upon a Mattress" didn't quite reach that level, but it was awfully fun and wonderfully stylish. And last season's "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" continued the tradition of excellence and first-rate entertainment.

In many ways, "Sweet Charity" is a direct descendant of

come to expect more from them than we do elsewhere, perhaps more than we have a right to expect. But we expect it nonetheless. And this time, they have fallen short.

I suppose it was bound to happen sooner or later. I mean, every home-run hitter flies out to left field from time to time. But you would have thought Dean and his staff would have seen this one coming.

In the first place, "Sweet Charity" is not one of your more compelling pieces of musical theater. True, it boasts a fine heritage — book by Neil Simon, music by Cy Coleman, lyrics by Dorothy Fields, conceived and staged by Bob Fosse, based on screenplay by Federico Fellini, among others.

But the quality of the material is not equal to the caliber of the talent of its creators. In fact, it isn't even close. This is superficial, one-dimensional, light-weight theater, the kind of thing Lagoon used to do when it was filling out a three-show season every summer with musicals like "Hit the Deck!", "Dames at Sea" and "Calamity Jane."

But the show's inherent weaknesses (and there are many, like dropping in production numbers like "Rhythm of Life" and "I Love to Cry At Weddings" for no reason that makes any dramatic sense at all) aren't nearly as troublesome as what seems to be a creeping conservatism in